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How's NaNoWriMo going? Do you have 20 percent of a novel on your hard drive yet? If not, maybe you're having trouble thinking of what to write. Fortunately, there's a place on nanowrimo.org that is full of ideas ripe for the stealing.Good morning, National Novel Writing Month participants! Did you do your 1667 words this morning?...Read moreIt's a forum called Adoption Society, so no, it's not actually stealing. People think of plots, and put the ones they can't use (or are willing to share) "up for adoption." Likewise characters, subplots, titles, and more. You need a free account on the NaNoWriMo website to view the forum, but I recommend it whether you're doing this month's challenge or not. The adoption society is packed with orphan ideas just begging for a home in your next work of fiction.Here are some of my favorites:Adopt a Magical Item - Perhaps one of your characters could drink the Mead of Long Life, which keeps you from dying but only if you toast someone else when you drink it. Or perhaps someone can read (or aspire to write) the Total Perspective Book, which describes the vastness of the universe so perfectly that anyone who reads it becomes utterly incapacitated. Adopt a Ragtag Group of Misfits - Does your novel need a group of couples, all dysfunctional, on an assignment as part of therapy? Or perhaps your office romance occurs in a department of all the people who couldn't be fired, and who are the only ones around when a crisis breaks out. Adopt a Space Filler/Quick Little Moment - One of your characters gets the munchies and takes the rest of the squad on a detour for food. You can describe the food in as much detail as you like. Or your character stops to pet a stray dog. It follows him everywhere. Name the dog. And if you're having trouble naming those characters, misfits, items, or even that cute little dog, stop by the Appellation Station forum, where procrastinating writers are stationed 24/7 doling out monikers. By ExtremeTech Staff on December 17, 2001 at 10:12 am This site may earn affiliate commissions from the links on this page. Terms of use. Novell Connection is a monthly magazine for network administrators that covers Novell-specific management issues. This site provides current and past issues of the magazine for free. It handles topics such as remote access, security, connectivity, resource sharing, and e-mail management. Article authors include NetWare professionals, so the advice, tutorials, and strategies come from first-hand experience. Your answer really summed up how I feel too. I don't think any artist should be restricted to writing their "race" — whatever that means. In my book I write from the first-person of a white Danish immigrant, which I'm not. But I know I wrote that consciousness with a lot of love and empathy and in a sincere attempt to understand. Barbara Kingsolver says that one of the great functions of fiction is that it allows us to empathize with the "theoretical stranger." As writers our job is to bridge those theoretical differences.NB: The "theoretical stranger" — I love that, and I totally agree. So, my writing process is pretty straightforward. Until recently, I was writing every day — or at least five days a week. You're right to sense that Queen Sugar has been in the works for a long time; it took me 11 years to write if you count the years between the time I quit my job in 1999 to the month I sold the manuscript in 2011. The story evolved over time. I had the basic premise — a woman leaves Los Angeles and returns to South Louisiana — from the beginning, but the question of why she returns was something I discovered over a number of years. I learned a tremendous amount about myself as a writer in the course of writing this book. I learned what kind of writer I am, what I value in a story. I learned to trust my instincts about my writing process — when to push and when to step away. I learned that as much of a dreamer as I consider myself to be, I can be incredibly stubborn. Maybe stubborn is the wrong word. Maybe determined is a more accurate description. I also learned some painful lessons about the business of writing. Let's just say, I've definitely been tempered by this process.Your story is my story! I quit my job two years before you and it took me 12 years to write and get my book published! So I totally understand how your story must have evolved so much over the years. It takes determination to be a fiction writer — I'm so glad as a reader that you stuck to it! You crafted a great story and a great read. I think during my long journey to publishing I had the same kind of determination that was sometimes bordering delusion. After three dozen rejection letters from editors, I was still certain the book should be published. Twelve more rejections later and one yes and I was right. All of that said, how are you approaching the next book? Can you tell what it's about? Do you have the same determination, or hunger or delusion to write it as you did the first book?NB: I have the idea for the next book, but I haven't started writing it yet. My plan is to start working on it, in earnest, this summer. I can't say much about it because the idea is still fragile and barely formed. I can say, it will be another Louisiana book because there's so much more I want to explore. I'm not finished with Louisiana, and I don't think Louisiana is finished with me. That said, I want to set up new challenges for myself. I read a wonderful quote by Jonathan Franzen a while back. He said:"As a writer, nowadays, you owe it to your readers to set yourself the most difficult challenge that you have some hope of being equal to. And if you do this, and you succeed in producing a reasonably good book, it means that the next time you try to write a book, you're going to have to dig even deeper and reach even farther, or else, again, it won't be worth writing. And what that means, in practice, is that you have to become a different person to write the next book. The person you already are already wrote the best book you could. There's no way to move forward without changing yourself."I love the spirit of this quote because it gets to the heart of what happens when we write. We're not the same people we are at the end of a book that we were at the beginning. We owe it to our readers and to ourselves, to reset the bar, to set up a new challenge. So, as I think about the next book, the one I have in mind, I imagine it as something different from Queen Sugar. Similar in that it'll be set in Louisiana, but different in subject matter, more challenging in some way, I hope. I find that prospect exciting ... and also terrifying.Will I approach it with the same determination? Absolutely, I don't see any other way. Will I be as delusional? Probably. I think you have to be delusional, on some level, to write a novel. It's such a long, difficult journey. But even when it was difficult and frustrating, even when I was bitterly discouraged, there was a sweetness to the experience. Something deeply satisfying. Finding an agent and getting the book published was another matter entirely. I entered into that experience with certain expectations, and by the end, I was much more pragmatic. The business side of being a writer tempered me, and I know I won't approach that process in the same way. But I really think you have to allow yourself to be a bit of a dreamer when you're writing. Otherwise, why would you do it? There has to be joy; there has to be magic. If anything, I hope this next novel won't take 12 years. That would be nice. But if it does, it does. I'm not going to fight the process and put something out there that's not ready. That would be the worst.I think that's the only way — to write the story in the time it takes — but yes, don't take another 12 years if possible! So now you've done it: You're a published and "real" writer. Before we sign off, any suggestions to the writers out there still in the hunt?NB: I guess my best piece of advice is, find the people who share your vision. Lots of people will have opinions about your work. Their intentions may be good, but they might steer you in a direction that isn't right for you. It's important to listen to what people have to say, but then learn how to take the advice that works for you and discard the rest. And when you find people who truly understand what you're trying to do, what you're trying to say, who really understand you as a writer, be grateful! Cherish those relationships. By ExtremeTech Staff on June 29, 2001 at 12:00 am This site may earn affiliate commissions from the links on this page. Terms of use. Novell's knowledgebase provides solutions to problems submitted over the years; the archival nature of the data set makes it a giant resource. You can search the database by key word, phrase, or document number. You can also find online manuals. If you're having a problem with a Novell product, this is the place to go. A novel is a narrative work of prose fiction that tells a story about specific human experiences over a considerable length. Prose style and length, as well as fictional or semi-fictional subject matter, are the most clearly defining characteristics of a novel. Unlike works of epic poetry, it tells its story using prose rather than verse; unlike short stories, it tells a lengthy narrative rather than a brief selection. There are, however, other characteristic elements that set the novel apart as a particular literary form. A novel is a work of prose fiction that tells a narrative over an extended length.Novels date as far back as 1010's Tale of Genji by Murasaki Shikibu; European novels first appeared in the early seventeenth century.Novels overtook epic poetry and chivalric romances as the most popular mode of storytelling, with an emphasis on the personal reading experience.Today, novels come in a wide array of subgenres For the most part, novels are dedicated to narrating individual experiences of characters, creating a closer, more complex portrait of these characters and the world they live in. Inner feelings and thoughts, as well as complex, even conflicting ideas or values are typically explored in novels, more so than in preceding forms of literature. It's not just the stories themselves that are more personal, but the experience of reading them as well. Where epic poetry and similar forms of storytelling were designed to be publicly read or consumed as an audience, novels are geared more towards an individual reader. The following traits must be present for a work to be considered a novel: Written in prose, as opposed to verse. Narrators may have different degrees of knowledge or different points of view (first person versus third person and so on). While stylized novels such as epistolary novels do exist, the key distinction here is between prose and verse. Of considerable length/word count. There is no specific word count that automatically makes a work a novel, but in general, a short novel would be considered a novella, and even shorter than that would be short fiction. Fictional content. Semi-fictionalized novels (such as historical works inspired by true events or persons) exist, but a work of pure non-fiction would not be classified as a novel. Individualism, both on the page and for the intended audience. In the everyday vernacular, the novel has come to be associated most closely with fiction, as opposed to nonfiction. For the most part, that association stands: not all fiction is novels, but all novels are fiction. A non-fiction prose work that is of the same length as a novel could fall into several other categories, such as historiography, biography, and so on. Although a novel is typically a work of fiction, many novels do weave in real human history. This can range from full-fledged novels of historical fiction, which focus on a specific era in history or depict semi-fictional narrative about real historical persons, to works of fiction that simply exist in the "real" world and carry that baggage and implications. There also are early modern works of historical nonfiction that were embellished with unconfirmed traditions or made-up speeches for dramatic effect. Despite this, for most purposes we can assume that, when we're talking about novels, we're talking about works of narrative fiction. Novels come in all styles imaginable, with every author bringing their own unique voice to the table. There are a handful of major subgenres that tend to make up a large share of the market, although there are many other genres (and mash-ups of genres) out there. A few of the major types of novels you might need to know about: Mystery novels revolve around a crime that must be solved, often a murder but not always. The traditional format will have a detective—either professional or amateur—as the protagonist, surrounded by a group of characters who help solve the crime or are suspects. Over the course of the story, the detective will sift through clues, including false leads and red herrings, to solve the case. Some of the best-known novels of all time fall into the mystery genre, including the Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys series, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes novels, and Agatha Christie's novels. Christie's And Then There Were None is the world's best-selling mystery novel. One of the more popular genres of novels is science fiction and fantasy, which both deal with speculative world building. The lines between the two are often blurred, but in general, science fiction tends to imagine a world that's different because of technology, while fantasy imagines a world with magic. Early science fiction included the works of Jules Verne and continued on through George Orwell's seminal classics such as 1984; contemporary science fiction is a highly popular genre. Some of the best-known novels in Western literature are fantasy novels, including the Lord of the Rings series, The Chronicles of Narnia, and Harry Potter; they owe their debt to European epic literature. Thriller novels are occasionally combined with other genres, most often with mystery or science fiction. The defining characteristic is that these novels are often designed to induce a sense of fear, suspense, or psychological horror in the reader. Early versions of this genre included The Count of Monte Cristo (a revenge thriller) and Heart of Darkness (a psychological/horror thriller). More contemporary examples might be the novels of Stephen King. Romance novels of the present day have some things in common with "romances" of the past: the idea of romantic love as an end goal, the occasional scandal, intense emotions at the center of it all. Today's romances, however, are more specifically focused on telling a story of a romantic and/or sexual love between characters. They often follow highly specific structures and are all but required to have an optimistic or "happy" resolution. Romance is currently the most popular novel genre in the United States. Just like its name suggests, historical fiction is simply a fictional story that takes place at some real, past time in human history. Some instances of historical fiction involve fictional (or semi-fictional) stories about actual historical figures, while others insert wholly original characters into real-life events. Iconic works of historical fiction include Ivanhoe, A Tale of Two Cities, Gone with the Wind, and The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Realist fiction is, quite simply, fiction that eschews heightened genre or style to attempt to tell a story that "could" take place in the world as we know it. The focus is on representing things truthfully, without romanticization or artistic flourishes. Some of the best-known realist authors include Mark Twain, John Steinbeck, Honoré de Balzac, Anton Chekov, and George Eliot. A novel can be structured in a myriad of ways. Most commonly, novels will be structure chronologically, with story segments divided into chapters. However, this is not the only structural option for authors. Chapters tend to revolve around some small portion of the novel that is unified by a character, theme, or piece of plot. In larger novels, chapters may be grouped together into even larger sections, perhaps grouped by time period or an overarching portion of the story. The division into smaller "chunks" of story is one of the defining elements of a novel; a story that's short enough to not need such divisions is likely not lengthy enough to qualify as a full-lengthy novel. Authors may choose to structure novels in a variety of different ways. Instead of telling a story chronologically, for instance, the story may toggle between different time periods in order to maintain suspense or make a thematic point. Novels may also switch between the perspectives of multiple characters, rather than focusing on a single character as the sole protagonist. A novel may be told in the first person (narrated by a character) or in the third person (narrated by an outside "voice" with varying degrees of knowledge). Regardless of the time frame, a novel's plot will often follow what is known as the three-act structure. The opening chapters will be concerned with acquainting readers with the main cast of characters and the world of the story, before a specific incident, typically referred to as the "inciting incident," shakes up the status quo and launches the "real" story. From that point, the story (now in "Act 2") will enter a series of complications as the protagonist pursues some goal, encountering obstacles and smaller goals along the way. At the midpoint of the story, there will often be some major shift that raises the stakes, all leading up to the emotional and narrative climax towards the end of the novel. "Act 3" concerns itself with this finale and the fallout. Burgess, Anthony. "Novel." Encyclopaedia Britannica, . Doody, Margaret Anne. The True Story of the Novel. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996. Kuiper, Kathleen, ed. Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1995. Watt, Ian. The Rise of the Novel. 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